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A Cultural History Of Gesture

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The 'hand of friendship': shaking hands and other gestures in the Dutch Republic

HERMAN ROODENBURG

'I think I can see the precise and distinguishing marks of national characters more in those nonsensical *minutiae* than in the most important matters of state'.

Laurence Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey*.

Among the many gestures we make each day, shaking hands is certainly the one taken most for granted. Because this popular greeting has been observed in numerous countries for many generations – at least in the Western world – we are easily apt to think that the handshake is among our most 'traditional' gestures.' But just how old is this greeting? In antiquity the handshake was widely known, though it was not the everyday gesture of greeting and leave-taking as we now know it.' Indeed, the same would seem to apply to early modern Europe. Foreign travellers in the Dutch Republic, for example, only recorded such salutations as bowing or taking off the hat; the handshake was not mentioned at all.' A remarkable event, which took place in 1612, confirms this picture. In that year a flaming row arose in one of Amsterdam's churches between Simon Episcopius, the future Remonstrant leader, and a

couple of orthodox ministers. When Episcopius finally left the Church, he discovered to his anger that none of these ministers took the trouble of properly greeting him: 'there was no-one who raised his hat or hand.' Again, no mention of shaking hands.'

It is quite possible that, having collected these and other first-hand reports, we will not find a positive history but a negative one, a history of the anomalous, of refraining from particular salutations, and the affronts suffered by its victims. The Quakers, a Puritan sect that had most of its followers in England, Holland, and Pennsylvania, were even notorious for such behaviour. They deliberately violated the existing conventions of politeness, refusing to call someone 'your grace', when he was not in a state of grace, or to say 'your humble servant', when he was not their master at all. They even rejected the use of 'you' to a single individual, insisting instead on the more familiar or – in the presence of one's superiors – even insulting 'thou' and 'thee'. They also refrained from all the worldly gestures that accompany these modes of address, such as bowing, curtsying or taking off one's hat. Scorning all 'idle talk' and 'empty ritual', they took such conventions quite literally, thereby denying those phatic and ceremonial aspects of language and gesturing that have been stressed by sociologists, anthropologists, and sociolinguists alike. Of course, as historians we can only be grateful to the Quakers. Thanks to their 'rudeness', a fair number of first-hand reports on the daily gestures of greeting and leave-taking and the feelings and notions attached to them have been preserved. But it is once again remarkable that none of the gestures that were rejected by these men and women included our modern-day gesture of shaking hands.⁵

Are we to conclude from these few pointers that the handshake as a salutation was not even known in early modern Europe, that its history has been much shorter than we think? Before drawing such a conclusion it will be necessary to consider another source that, even if it says little about the handshake, will at least help us to establish the precise connotations of such gestures as bowing, doffing, or curtsying. I am referring to those many manuals on civility that, especially from the sixteenth century on, became so popular among the European elite. The wider connotations of these gestures are interesting because they were not isolated. They

were directly related to notions of proper posture and usage. For centuries bowing, lifting the hat, and other gestures have been part of a whole 'science of conversing agreeably' – the actual subject of these manuals – by which the upper strata could distinguish themselves from the rest of the population. In other words, although the handshake may be absent from these treatises, we can at least deduce from these wider views on the body and its social meanings why it was not part of that 'science', and why it was not considered 'polite'. Being most at home with the history of the Dutch Republic, I have confined myself to the manuals published there."

In addition to other material, I have made sparing use of pictorial evidence to support my argument. Using contemporary genre paintings can easily get a historian into trouble. Gerard Terborch's *The Suitor's Visit*, now in Washington, is a case in point (see figure 7.1). At first sight this wonderful painting seems to present a scene from polite society. We see a well-dressed man entering a room and making a bow to a young lady standing in front of him. A closer look at the painting, however, shows us that the woman makes a second gesture with her hands. We seem to recognize the 'fica', the obscene gesture in which the thumb is slipped between the index and the middle finger.⁷ So, instead of an elegant scene we are apparently confronted with a very ambiguous scene in which all the details, including the elegant visitor, are put in another, rather mysterious light."

THE IMPACT OF THE MANUALS ON CIVILITY IN THE DUTCH REPUBLIC

Like other countries, the Dutch had their own traditions of courtoisie and *civilité*, especially in the seventeenth century as French manners became ever more popular among the Dutch elite. Unfortunately, the exact pace of this process is still a matter of debate. The famous manuals on civility, those of Castiglione, Erasmus, Della Casa, and De Courtin, were all translated into Dutch; the first edition of De Courtin's *Nouveau traité de la civilité* was even published in Amsterdam. But most of these translations were published after 1650. Before that time it was



Figure 7.1 Gerard Terborch, *The Suitor's Visit*, c.1658.
(National Gallery of Art, Washington, Andrew W. Mellon Collection.)

mainly Erasmus's *De civilitate morum puerilium* that dominated the market, though its actual reputation is difficult to assess.' Other works, with the exception of Stefano Guazzo's *De civili Conversatione* which found a translator in 1603, were not available in Dutch during this period.¹⁰ Even Castiglione's *Libro del Cortegiano* was not translated until 1662.¹¹ Ten years later, in 1672 (a year after the original French edition), the first translation of De Courtin's *Traité* was published in Amsterdam. Both the original text and its translation were quite popular in the Republic. In 1675

and 1733 two other Dutch editions appeared, the latter undergoing three additional printings.¹² In 1715, Giovanni della Casa's *Galateo* was translated." Finally, in 1735, a completely Dutch manual by C. van Laar was published, the first since Erasmus's little treatise. It was called the *Groot ceremonie-boek der beschaafde zeeden*. Remarkably enough, this book has gone unnoticed by Dutch historians, despite the fact that it has over 500 pages and was heavily influenced by De Courtin."

It seems then that from the middle of the seventeenth century onwards Dutch, French, and Italian manuals on civility were fairly popular in the Dutch Republic. But what about the last decades of the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth centuries? It is difficult to believe that the Dutch at that time were hardly interested in any *courtoisie* or *civilité*, let alone that their manners were still as 'plain' and 'unfeigned' as Erasmus described them jokingly in his *Praise of Folly* of 1509.¹⁵ Still, in 1651, Jean de Parival, the professor of French at Leiden University, concluded that the Dutch had long been notorious for their rude manners, but lately had become known for their refinement.¹⁶ De Parival's comment seems to coincide nicely with the increased interest in the manuals on civility around the middle of the seventeenth century. However, already in the 1590s an English traveller, Fynes Moryson, had observed almost the same thing among the inhabitants of the province of Holland: 'In manners they were of old rude and are so to this day in some measure, and the Hollanders have of old beene vulgarly called plumpe, that is blunt or rude. Yet since their last long warr they are much refyned in manners by their conversation . . .'¹⁷ It is certainly risky to adopt such verdicts. Most travellers had at best an incomplete knowledge of the Dutch language and customs. Indeed, some of them just repeated the impressions of other travellers. Besides, the English often made the same comments about the French, the French about the English, and the Spanish about the French. Before using sources like these, we should always look at the wider context of such pronouncements.¹⁸

Actually, the Dutch upper classes had already adopted many of the foreign fashions and manners long before the manuals found a larger audience. In the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries they were clearly impressed by the more ostentatious

lifestyle of the Flemish and Brabantine refugees who after the Fall of Antwerp in 1585 had fled in such large numbers to the north. Among them were the wealthiest families from Antwerp. Poets and playwrights, such as Roemer Visscher or Gerbrand Adriaensz. Bredero, scoffed heartily at the *courtoisie* of all these immigrants with their showy clothes and polished speech peppered with French words. But they also poked fun at many men and women who tried to imitate the refugees; evidently, the new lifestyle had caught on. Indeed, in 1615 one of Amsterdam's Calvinist ministers admonished his parishioners for blaming their worldliness on the Flemish, as they themselves had been all too eager to adopt these latest fashions."') In 1625 two ministers even reported that they had spotted the first mannequins in town.²⁰ By that time it was probably no longer the *courtoisie* of the wealthy Flemish families but more and more the fashions followed at the courts in the Hague or even Paris that worried them. It seems likely that after 1620 the wealth and manners of the refugees had been more or less accepted. For example, Rosette, a light-hearted character in Jacob Cats's extremely popular treatise on marriage, modelled herself on the manners and clothes then fashionable at the court in The Hague." Apparently, in trying to secure itself a place among the other European courts, the stadholder's court had already developed sufficient standing to be alluring to young, worldly women such as Rosette.

Thus many of the new rules on civility must have reached the Dutch upper strata, not through the manners books but through other, largely oral channels – for example by making the Grand Tour," by instruction at the fashionable 'French schools',²³ or by instruction by tutors and dancing-masters (dancing was held to be highly beneficial to a proper posture²⁴) and, of course, one's parents. Direct influences from the court at The Hague were probably limited, though in its diplomacy (in which many of the city oligarchies were represented), it covered a wider range than merely court life itself.

POSTURE, GESTURE AND CIVILITY

As Samuel Johnson once observed, 'all works which describe manners, require notes in sixty or seventy years, or less'." If it was

already difficult for contemporaries to grasp the precise meaning of the rules that were pertinent a few generations ago, then such problems certainly apply to us. Some fifty years ago, on the basis of these works, Norbert Elias reconstructed a centuries-old European 'process of civilization'. From the thirteenth century onwards the rules of etiquette changed continually. After originating among the highest nobility the new codes would diffuse themselves: first, 'among the middle classes from the sixteenth century onwards; then among the lower classes from the nineteenth century onwards. In the course of this process the essential activities of life became more and more stylized or were even pushed back from the 'stage' (public life) 'into the wings'."

The manuals certainly provide us with a mine of information concerning such activities. Besides rules about urinating, defecating, or hiding one's nudity, they established other rules about blowing the nose, sneezing, coughing or spitting, in short, all those activities which 'we share with the animals' as De Courtin explained. It seems to me, however, that the bodily control propounded by the manuals went much further and that Elias discussed only one aspect of these treatises. Generally speaking, they established codes of behaviour, if only among the elite, for all sorts of 'relations in public'.²⁷ In fact, the insights and explanations set forth in these books constitute an early, though already highly accomplished, example of the study of 'non-verbal communication'. Thus many of the treatises deal at length with phenomena such as gestures, facial expression, or even 'paralingual phenomena' (the pitch or intensity of the voice, etc.). Attention to such details, so readers were told, was a prerequisite for the 'science of conversing agreeably' – one 'faux pas', one 'gaffe', was enough to break a man's career. The manuals are indeed teeming with all the larger and smaller social mistakes that were analysed so carefully by Erving Goffman."

Control of one's every movement, even of the eye, was obviously the first thing one had to learn. The rules given were surprisingly consistent. Erasmus, for example, urged his readers always to keep their bodies erect; they should not lean backwards (a sign of conceit), nor let their head hang to one side or the other, or gesticulate too wildly. When standing, they should keep their feet firmly together; when walking, they should not stagger, nor

go too slowly or too quickly; and as for sitting, it was improper to sit with arms akimbo (a very military thing to do), and unseemly to hold the knees apart, to keep the legs crossed, or to play with one's feet." Such advice about proper posture would hardly change at all. In a way De Courtin's treatise was very different, as the 'science of conversing agreeably' had been greatly developed by his time. His manual now dealt with a host of awkward situations and was thus much larger and far more detailed than Erasmus's little treatise had been." But that does not alter the fact that the author propounded a similar control of one's body. When standing, walking, or sitting a well-mannered person had to observe a certain 'measure and consonance', as De Courtin explained. Composure, a calm and erect posture, were strongly recommended. All in all, the rules remind us of Balzac's aphorism 'Le mouvement lent est essentiellement majestueux' or Nietzsche's observations on 'Was ist vornehm?': 'die langsame Gebärde, auch der langsame Blick'.³¹ Of course, some people swayed their heads, rolled their eyes or waved their hands as if swatting flies, but all such behaviour was 'against civility'. Again, when walking in the street one should not go too quickly so as to gasp for breath, nor too slowly, or walk 'as a woman or a bride' (meaning, perhaps, with downcast eyes). One also had to distinguish oneself from those bad-mannered people who swung their arms or legs 'as if they would like to sow' or raised their feet 'as if continually lifting them out of a tub'. Finally, when sitting, one should not be agitated, fumble with one's clothes, or cross the legs.³² It is indeed striking how all these rules resemble those in ancient Greece and Rome. To give just one example, Erasmus's and especially De Courtin's exhortations not to walk too slowly or too quickly are almost identical to those given by Cicero in his *De officiis*.³³

The new conventions, especially those on proper posture, were probably widespread among the Dutch elite. We only have to think of the way peasants, beggars, and other 'simple folk' were portrayed in the paintings of Adriaen Brouwer, Adriaen van Ostade, and their many predecessors and contemporaries. We find no erect postures there. On the contrary, most of the figures are stocky and hunchbacked, their heads twisted to one side or the other. Of course, all these paintings, just like the seventeenth-century *kluchten*, offer a caricature of lower-class life. They depict

the exact opposite of life among the upper urban classes, in which one's *courtoisie* or *civilité* was manifested first and foremost in one's comportment and gestures.³⁴ A proper posture was very important. In 1632 the famous poet and statesman, Constantijn Huygens, noticed much to his alarm that the head of his eldest son, Constantijn Jun. (for whom he had ambitious plans) inclined a bit to the left. Unfortunately, remedies such as a stiff collar, ribbons attached to his bonnet, or a treatment of steaming his neck were to no avail. Having seriously thought of taking his son to a certain peasant, probably a notorious bonesetter, the father finally decided for a university-trained physician from the city of Utrecht. This doctor made a gash of two inches long in the poor boy's neck, separating (according to his own report) the many entangled sinews there and greasing the whole machinery with some oil. To the parents's relief the operation was a great success. Indeed, being rid of this ailment, Constantijn went on to have a brilliant career as the personal secretary to Prince William III, the future king of England.³⁵

What was actually developed in all the manuals was a growing discipline over one's own body, a growing self-control that would finally distinguish Dutch and other northern manners from Mediterranean, and especially Italian, codes of conduct. To the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Dutch the difference was already clear. In the *Groot ceremonie-boeck*, the Italians 'who speak with their head, arms, feet and the whole body' were simply depicted as the antithesis of all civility. As the author explains, using a devoted 'instructor' as his mouthpiece, the French, the English, and the Dutch now rejected such strong movements. When speaking, the Dutch merely used the eye and 'a moderate movement of the hand to support [their] words'. Because of their lively gesticulation the Italians were put on a par with peasants or, even worse, the 'moffen' or Westphalians, the immigrants the Dutch loved to ridicule."

We also find another distinction. In general, as the *Groot ceremonie-boeck* argued, the comportment of the body should be 'without affectation . . . erect, without stiffness or constraint, free and easy in its natural gestures'. Indeed, when walking, one should place one's feet 'in such a way that the edifice of the body will rest well on them', as the gait should be 'well-ordered, without

swaying the body to and fro' or, as the writer continued, 'keeping it fixed in the Spanish way, as if not daring to turn one's head'.³⁷ This last remark, an obvious reference to the Spanish 'gravity' in manners, is interesting. In the 1650s some comparable observations were made by a Dutch traveller, François Aerssen van Sommelsdijck, on his travels through Italy and Spain. In the latter country he observed the 'gravité naturelle ou affectée' that was especially cherished at court, though he had found the same behaviour ('fort rogue et fort fière') among all Spaniards. It was a solemnity that he had not seen among the gesticulating Italians, except for the Spanish-oriented aristocracy in Genoa.³⁸ Before, in his *Spanish Brabanter* of 1617, Bredero had already ridiculed the 'pride' and 'gravity' of Jerolimo, the hero of his play.³⁹ Moreover, in the streets of Amsterdam and other Dutch cities, the wealthy Sephardim, who had fled the Iberian peninsula, must have displayed their 'gravidade'.⁴⁰ In other words, like their English contemporaries mentioned in Peter Burke's contribution to this volume, the Dutch were probably quite aware of the gestural cultures of other countries, making a sharp distinction between the proud and haughty style of the Spaniards and the more exuberant Italian style, the latter developing after the pioneering works of Castiglione and Della Casa had already made their mark on France, England, and the Dutch Republic.⁴¹

Elaborating a bit further on our critique of Elias and borrowing a few basic distinctions made within the study of non-verbal communication, we could even say that the rules of civility, this whole science of making oneself 'agreeable', had two important applications: first, how to avoid 'non-verbal leakage' and thereby betray oneself, and second, how to avoid intruding upon another's 'personal' or 'social space'. Of course, one's verbal assertions and the gestures that support them were the most important means of making oneself 'agreeable'. As they could be easily controlled, the manuals provided a host of instructions about how to accomplish this. Much more difficult, however, was a person's unintentional communication: one's posture or gait, or one's unintentional gestures during a conversation. As Erasmus, De Courtin, and Van Laar argued, this was precisely the part of a person's appearance others would search for even the tiniest clue if they did not wholly trust what he or she was conveying with words and with intended

gestures. In fact, they urged their readers not only to take heed of the 'expression they gave' but also of the 'expression they gave off', to borrow this phrase from Erving Goffman.⁴⁷ Erasmus, for example, cautioned that coughing while speaking was 'a gesture of those who lie' (is *gestus est mentrentium*).⁴⁸ De Courtin pointed to such 'giveaways' as scratching the body or fumbling with one's hat, buttons, or gloves.⁴⁹ More mysterious is the admonition not to cross the legs while sitting and conversing.⁵⁰ Probably such asymmetry in the positioning of the limbs was seen as a sign of relaxation and thus of a certain carelessness, if not indifference, towards the other person.⁵¹ We can find such carelessness, mixed with plenty of bravado, in the portrait of Willem van Heijthuisen, attributed to Frans Hals and now in Brussels. We see the man rocking on a chair, his legs crossed, holding a whip in his hands. Of course, our attention is also drawn to his prominent elbow (see figure 7.2). All these details were essential to portraiture. In his influential treatise on the art of painting Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo mentioned many of them, including the advice not to paint a high-born person with his legs crossed. For more information he referred the reader to Della Casa's *Galateo*.⁴⁷

A second application of the 'science of conversing agreeably' was to avoid intruding into another's 'personal space'. Doing such, the treatises explained, will make the other person feel encroached upon. In fact, it was mostly here that the feelings of embarrassment and shame, analysed by Norbert Elias, came in.⁴⁸ Of course, a certain physical distance had to be observed. Touching a person, especially one who was of a higher rank than oneself, could be very embarrassing indeed. To grab an elevated person's buttons, sleeves, or coat while talking to him was considered a very serious slip. Another intrusion was kissing a woman of higher rank without her permission to do so. And even when she did offer her cheek, one should only fake the gesture without really touching her face.⁵² Staring was deemed unseemly as well. Gazing at someone with one eye closed, as Erasmus explained, was quite discourteous; later, in the works of De Courtin and Van Laar, the rules were more subtle. The difficulties of being seated in a formal situation were another problem that might arise. When urged to be seated by someone of higher rank, one had to take a seat right opposite this person, but to look this man or woman straight in the eye after having done so



Figure 7.2 Frans Hals, *Willem van Heijthuyzen*, c.1637–9.
(Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Brussels.)

was seen as a serious lack of respect. It was better to sit sideways, with the head slightly tilted; one's gaze had to be modest and demure.⁵⁰ Speaking loudly, demanding as it were more space for oneself, and speaking up to prominent persons was understood as a similar violation of personal space.” The strongest feelings of

embarrassment and shame, however, were evoked by bodily excreta. The manuals dealt at length with contemporary feelings on coughing, spitting, eating, urinating, and defecating, but they also noted minor annoyances such as bad breath or a disagreeable body odour.⁵²

THE ART OF GREETING

Respecting the personal space of one's superiors was very important. In fact, the manuals devote a great deal of attention to the delicate actions of doffing one's hat, kissing a person's hand, curtsying or giving the right of way. Behaving courteously, showing *heusheidt* or *wellevendheidt*, had become quite complicated since the times of Erasmus, based as it was on a host of hidden codes and implicit expectations which demanded from every 'civilized' man or woman a thorough knowledge of the rules and, moreover, a subtle and continuous appeal to their intuition. Readers of Madame *Bovary* will remember how Emma's father, the old Rouault, urged his future son-in-law to keep his hat on while in his house. By doing so he showed his respect for Charles Bovary as Charles himself, by taking off his hat each time he entered the house, expressed his esteem for the father of his future bride. Such intricate ritual was long-standing. We find it explained as early as the seventeenth century in De Courtin and, having become even more intricate, in the *Groot ceremonie-boeck*.

When entering the house of someone of higher rank one should always doff the hat, De Courtin explained. On being received by this person one had to make a deep bow, while taking the hat in the left hand and staying left of the other person so that he could keep his right hand free. Of course, this man (or woman) could always urge his visitor to cover his head again, but doing so without his special request would be quite discourteous. And even then, when this person had to sneeze, one had to bare one's head immediately. Moreover, to make things even more complex both De Courtin and Van Laar deemed it proper to doff the hat a second time even if one was invited to keep it on. If this was followed by another request then one simply had to obey.⁵³ Of course, asking one's superiors to do so was completely wrong.⁵⁴



Figure 7.3 Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Syndics of the Amsterdam Drapers' Guild*, 1661.
(© Rijksmuseum-Stichting, Amsterdam.)

In his *Meaning in the Visual Arts*, the art historian Erwin Panofsky has drawn our attention to the problems of interpretation evoked by such a simple gesture as lifting the hat.⁵⁶ Surprisingly, in discussing this he did not use any pictorial evidence just as other art historians seem to have neglected such gestures in Dutch seventeenth-century painting.⁵⁶ Yet, the conventions behind such conduct, with its emphasis on deference to rank, can surely enlarge our understanding of these paintings. Rembrandt's *The Syndics of the Amsterdam Drapers' Guild* (see figure 7.3) is a case in point, as each of the men portrayed wears a hat except the servant Frans Hendricksz. Bel.⁵⁷ Likewise, in Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp* (see figure 7.4), the famous physician and future burgomaster is the only person whose head is covered; all the surgeons have removed their headgear as an obvious token of respect.

Women had their own special ways of showing deference. They curtsied and made other gestures, but they were also supposed to bare their heads in the company of their superiors. On entering the house of a high-born man or woman they had to take off their caps, unless these were merely adornments for their hair such as the fine-meshed caps then fashionable. Women also had their masks; we can still see them in the skating scenes painted by Hendrick Avercamp (see figure 7.5). In fact, it would have been strange if masks had not been there as they were intended above all to protect a lady's skin against a burning sun or a bitter wind. The manuals stipulated that a well-mannered woman should take her mask off in front of someone of higher rank. Nor was she allowed to put it on in this person's company unless expressly asked to do so.⁵⁸

These complicated rules were made even more complex, because persons of higher rank needed more 'personal space' than others. At court, one was advised to doff one's hat even when a servant went by carrying the monarch's food. The same gesture was required in front of a royal portrait, or even when reading a letter coming from his majesty. In other, more concrete situations, the monarch, like every person of higher rank, had the right of 'precedence': the 'right hand' or *hogerhand* as it was termed in Dutch. In other words, one had to keep left of this man or woman, walking one step behind them. But spaces also had their 'right' and



Figure 7.4 Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr Nicolaes Tulp*, 1632.
(Maurishuis, The Hague.)

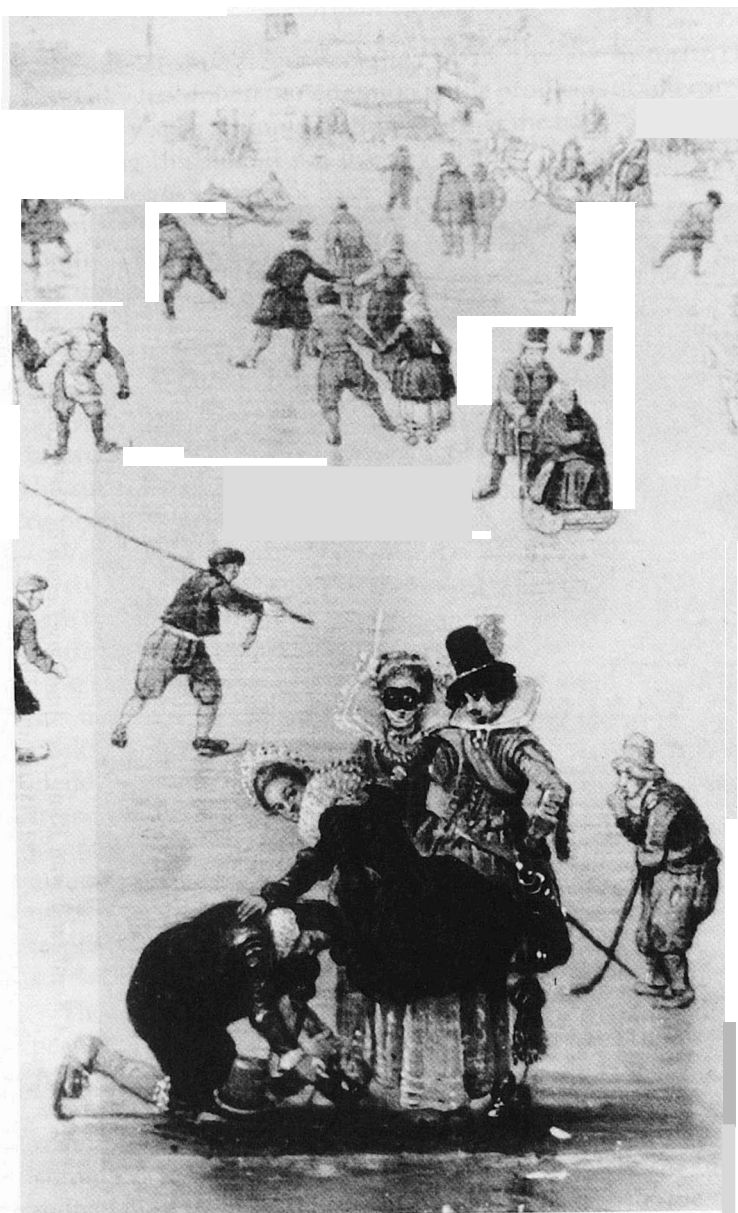


Figure 75 Hendrick Avercamp, *Skating Scene near a Town Resembling Kampen and Utrecht* (detail), c. 1610.
(Amsterdam, Private Collection.)

'left hand', their *hogerhand* and *lagerhand*. Locating these spaces was relatively simple indoors: the left hand was usually where one had entered the room. But where was it in the streets? Normally, when walking one had to pass a prominent person on his left. But if the street had a gutter, then the left hand was always there, regardless of the other's position. However, if a wall ran along the street, then the left hand was not there, but on the other side. In other words, one had to give this person 'the wall'."

It is striking that these last details were only mentioned in De Courtin's original text and not in the Dutch translation that was published only one year afterwards. In general, the Dutch rules were probably less strict than those in France. Rank and station were certainly valued in the Republic but modern historians agree that the differences between, for example, elite and popular culture were significantly smaller than elsewhere in early modern Europe. Simon Schama even dismissed the whole distinction and replaced it with a *brede middenstand*, a broad middle class 'which could include anyone from skilled artisans, members of a guild and earning more than ten stuivers a day . . . all the way up to the magnates of commerce, industry and finance, who would have disdained being classified as aristocrats.'"⁶¹ The author may have stretched his point, but the difference from other countries was certainly there. Foreigners often observed that the Dutch loved equality (a label they hardly applied to other European people), and the Dutch themselves agreed. In 1603, Gomes van Trier, the Flemish native who translated Guazzo's *De civili conversatione*, concluded that the Dutch were not interested in civility, one of the obstacles being 'that very great misunderstanding of some, who (under the appearance of humble people) want to promote equality here in this world'."⁶² More than a hundred years later, in the 1730s, the author Justus van Effen likewise hinted at the Dutch love for equality, judging that all this consciousness of rank and station that went along with the rules of civility was more natural with strongly hierarchic states than with a 'common-wealth' (meaning his own country), 'where in a certain way all the inhabitants might be seen as each other's equals'.⁶² Both observations are interesting because they make us aware of a crucial aspect of the manuals: their strengthening and crystallizing of social hierarchy, engraving its codes even on the body, on its comportment and gestures.

But even if the rules of *courtoisie* and *civilité* were toned down in the Republic, the major rules were certainly known. Of course, among the lower classes showing deference, lifting one's hat to superiors etc., was only natural." Unfortunately, it is far more difficult to find out to what extent the minor rules were known. In Dutch diplomacy they were often observed. Indeed, the resemblance between the 'pointilles' cherished in these circles and the rules that were later expounded by De Courtin and Van Laar is really remarkable. Hat-honour, giving the right of way, and all the other codes were vital within international relations because the rank and honour rendered to an envoy were rendered first and foremost to his monarch and his country. Even modest gestures, such as lifting the hat, reflected a delicate and far from static order in which the French and English kings held the higher and the German electors the lower positions. Within this balance of power the Dutch would soon claim a position immediately after the Venetian Republic. That was certainly a position of distinction, as Venice itself held the last position in the line of European kingdoms.⁶⁴

However, only in 1650 would the Estates-General finally capture the position they had been striving for. In that year Louis XIV rendered the new Dutch ambassador, Willem Boreel, the same honour that he had rendered thus far only to the Venetian Republic. Of course, in entering the hall where he was received in audience, Boreel had to doff his hat and bow three times in approaching the king; that was standard procedure. But at the third bow Louis had taken his headgear off and had asked Boreel, who had covered himself again, to follow his example. All this had happened even before Boreel had presented his credentials and started to deliver his solemn speech on behalf of the Estates-General. The whole event was a victory for Dutch diplomacy.⁶⁵ Still, in the years before the Estates-General had been less successful. Clearly afraid of receiving too little honour, they had repeatedly instructed their envoys to cover their heads even if the monarch did not request it. Yet in order to avoid an awkward situation they had to doff their hats again at the first possible opportunity. It is this uncertainty and compromising within the bounds of possibility that remind us immediately of the complicated ritual expounded in the manuals. We find the same similarities in giving the right of way, in offering and taking seats, bearing in

mind the 'right' and 'left hand', etc. Indeed, such considerations were crucial to the Munster negotiations in 1648 as they were to each international contact, whether audiences, visits, banquets, or other diplomatic meetings.⁶⁷

Clearly, De Courtin, Van Laar and all the other authors of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century manners books took much of their knowledge from diplomatic circles. It also seems likely that even the Dutch upper classes adopted many of these minor rules. "There certainly was a relaxing of the rules, as is revealed by the cuts made by De Courtin's translator. But it is striking that contemporary jokes and anecdotes were only aimed at too much 'punctilio', at those men and women who always stood on their authority." We also know that young men such as François van Aerssen, who made their Grand Tour through Europe, knew exactly how to value the honours rendered to them when received at court. "And we saw how rich patricians such as Nicolaes Tulp ordered paintings in which the codes of 'hat-honour' were strictly followed."⁷¹ Even in circles where an outsider would have expected a different, more egalitarian style, the rules had made their mark. John Locke was clearly surprised that even the Labadists, a Protestant sect, bowed to each other or took their hats off when meeting a fellow member.⁷² Was it perhaps another gesture, for example the handshake, that Locke had expected in these circles? It is certainly remarkable that among all the gestures and postures laid down in the manuals this one gesture was never mentioned. It is missing from the texts and from the illustrated title page of De Courtin's *Nouveau traité*. There we see a couple of figures bowing, doffing the hat or kissing a lady's hand, but no one is shaking anyone else's hand.

SHAKING HANDS

If the handshake was omitted from the early modern 'manners books', if this gesture did not fit in with the strengthening of rank and station that went along with the new rules of *courtoisie* and *civilité*, then we have to look elsewhere, in other situations – for example in the neighbourhoods of seventeenth-century towns

where the gesture was definitely known, though in a very different sense.

Surprisingly, though community studies have proliferated in recent years only a few have been undertaken on neighbourhoods in the early modern town. In fact, Richard Cobb, writing on the neighbourhoods in eighteenth-century Paris (which he characterizes as 'urban villages'), has been one of the exceptions. It is probably the widespread theory that urbanization can only lead to a corrosion of social bonds and all traditional values of the countryside that has been responsible for this neglect. But it seems quite likely that this process has been less destructive, or at least less cogent, than historians have so far assumed. An interesting book by David Garrioch on the same Paris quarters studied by Cobb suggests a more opaque development. And the same seems to hold true for such neighbourhoods in the seventeenth-century Republic.⁷³

Obviously, life in these neighbourhoods was quite intense. Rites of passage such as baptism, marriage, and funerals were the outstanding occasions where all the neighbours were invited for a communal meal, a custom in every town. In some of them we also find the so-called *jonkmalen*, occasions where the local youth would gather, or the *buurmalen*, organized once a year or every two or three years by the *buurt-* or *wijkmeester*, where all the inhabitants of a particular neighbourhood would gather. Neighbourhoods probably comprised no more than a couple of streets, side-streets, and alleys. In 1795, for example, The Hague had 71 neighbourhoods and Leiden 135. Most striking in the regulations issued by such quarters is the desire to promote the 'good peace and civil unity' (the goede *vrede* ende *burgerlijke eenigheyt*) or the 'continuation of good neighbourliness and extension of friendship' (the continuatie van goede *buurschap* ende *vermeerderinge van vrientschap*) among the inhabitants.⁷⁴

The *buurtmeesters* or neighbourhood officials were a familiar sight and were described by, among others, Jean de Parival. In his book, he mentions 'une certaine coustume' in Dutch towns, 'qui a pour but, la paix, amitié, et concorde'. He explains how the towns were divided into 'plusieurs voisinages', and how each of these quarters had its own 'maitre', supported by several 'conseillers'. He continues, 's'il arrive quelque different, les parties comparoissent

devant ledit maitre qui tasche de les mettre d'accord'. Apparently, Dutch neighbourhood officials could act as arbitrators in disputes. What De Parival stumbled upon was, in fact, one of those 'extrajudicial' institutions described by Bruce Lenman and Geoffrey Parker: semi-official institutions where people could settle their conflicts without having to appeal to an official court of justice.⁷⁵ De Parival then goes on to say that if the 'maitre' had failed to reconcile both parties they could appeal to the twice-weekly sittings of the 'commissaires . . . constituez pour entendre les plaintes et pacifier les parties'. It was only after these commissioners were likewise unsuccessful that the parties were allowed to take the official course of justice. What interests us most, however, is the way in which these disputes were settled before the neighbourhood officials: that is, the precise way in which amends were made for the affronts and injurious words that had been suffered by one of the parties. According to De Parival such reconciliations were reached by a recantation and confession by the person who had been in the wrong, 'par celuy qui a blesst la reputation de l'autre, en disant qu'il le tient pour honneste homme et que la parole a estt laschte par colere.' He then concludes: 'alors ils se donnent la main'.⁷⁶ An English traveller who copied De Parival's text word for word put it even more strongly: 'then they shake hands, and are made friends'.⁷⁷

De Parival was probably writing about such reconciliatory rituals in Leiden where he was professor, or possibly those in The Hague and Haarlem where the neighbourhood officials fulfilled a similar function. Amsterdam also had its *buurtmeesters*, but there they seem to have had other responsibilities such as overseeing the poor. Leafing through the records of the Calvinist church, however, we come across numerous cases in which the handshake equally served as a confirmation, a seal of reconciliation. In cases where someone had been involved in a lengthy dispute or had scolded another church member or had slapped him in the face, the Amsterdam Calvinist consistory always tried to reconcile both parties. Problems such as marital discord and even separations of bed and board, seen by both Church and State as only a temporary parting, were dealt with in the same way. In all these cases the parties were summoned before the ministers and elders and, in the imposing ambience of the consistory, pressured to settle their

dispute. The procedure was very similar to that employed by the neighbourhood officials. The party that had been most in the wrong would confess his fault and declare that he knew the other to be an 'honest' person. Finally he would ask the other party for forgiveness. Many of these reconciliations did not go smoothly as both parties often muttered all sorts of accusations. Still, most cases were finally concluded with formal reconciliation in which both parties gave each other the *hand van vriendschap* ('the hand of friendship'), the *hand van broederschap* ('the hand of brotherhood'), or sometimes even the *vredekus* ('the kiss of peace'), a simple but telling ritual that was accompanied by a firm exhortation to burn all discord in the fire of love.⁷⁸ Year after year the Amsterdam consistory dealt with numerous cases in which such *hantgevinghe* or *hanttastinghe* finally sealed the peace between both parties. Probably such reconciliations were standard routine for all consistories, whether Calvinist, Lutheran, or Mennonite.

It seems, then, that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and probably for a good deal of the eighteenth century, shaking hands had a very different meaning from the ritual act we know today. It looks as if the gesture was not part of any greeting or parting behaviour at all but that it had quite different connotations which centred around such concepts as friendship, brotherhood, peace, reconciliation, accord, or mutual agreement. Seen from this perspective other situations in which the handshake was widely used easily spring to mind, for example the judicial discharge *onder handtstinge*, a discharge from prosecution whereby the defendant committed himself to appear at all times in court.⁷⁹ The still popular gesture of slapping hands to seal a business transaction is another example. The brokers at the Amsterdam stock exchange were even notorious for their 'manic display of wild and speedy hand slapping', but the same gesture could probably be noticed at every market whether in the city or the countryside. We can still recognize such hand slapping in one of Sebastiaen Vrancx's paintings of Antwerp.⁸⁰ Turning to other pictorial evidence, we can also point to the famous emblem of the Beggars: two hands clasped together, hung with a beggar's cup, denoting the league made between those Dutch nobles who had adopted the term of abuse bestowed on them by vice-queen Margaretha of Parma as an honorary title.⁸¹ We find another clasping of the hands in Van der

Helst's painting of the Amsterdam St George guard celebrating the Peace of Munster in 1648 (see figure 7.6). We recognize the captain, Cornelis Jansz. Witsen, holding the silver drinking horn of the guard and shaking hands with his lieutenant, Johan Oetgens van Waveren. As the poem tucked under the snare of the drum



Figure 7.6 Bartholomeus van der Helst, *The Celebration of the Peace of Munster, 18 June 1648, in the Headquarters of the Crossbowmen's Civic Guard, (St George's Guard), Amsterdam* (detail), 1648.
(© Rijksmuseum-Stichting, Amsterdam.)

suggests, the captain offers his lieutenant 'the horn of peace'.⁸² Even more telling are the handshakes depicted in the sometimes stately, sometimes quite informal marriage portraits of the period. In his catalogue *Portretten van echt en trouw* De Jongh selected a number of paintings in which man and wife (as well as engaged couples) extend a hand to one another. Sometimes they offer the right hand and sometimes the left. The meaning of the gesture, especially of the *dextrarum iunctio* in the marriage portraits, is easy to interpret. Then, as now, the gesture was used in all wedding ceremonies as a sacral and legal sign (as it was in antiquity) of the *consensus ad idem* between man and wife.⁸³

HIERARCHY AND EQUALITY

It seems quite likely, then, that one of our most popular salutations was still unknown before 1800. The gesture itself was certainly known but it had a different meaning from the present one. Indeed it was only in the nineteenth century, for example in a French manual of 1858, that the handshake was finally included in the official etiquette of the elite though the gesture was still deemed improper, at least outside the sphere of friendship. As its author, the Baronesse de Fresne, makes clear, 'Ne donnez votre main qu'à vos amis, et ne l'offrez jamais à un supérieur'. Such a gesture 'est de bien mauvais ton et peut vous exposer à recevoir un affront'.⁸⁴

The baronesse's observation is interesting because two centuries earlier the Quakers had made a comparable distinction between friendship and the rules of civility. In his famous history of the sect, William Sewell explained that the Quakers declined the 'common fashion of greeting' such as baring their heads and other gestures of deference. Instead, they deemed it 'more agreeable with Christian simplicity to greet one another by giving their hand'. In the Quakers' view these and other 'innocent' gestures were 'signs of friendship and respect, that may be shewed, without giving to man that which appertains to God . . .'. For the Quakers this particular gesture connoted friendship and brotherhood, just as they addressed each other as 'friends' thereby eliminating all hierarchy and class distinctions among themselves.⁸⁵

What these two examples seem to suggest is that the handshake

as a salutation somehow originated with the Quakers and then spread from this highly closed and egalitarian community to other sections of society as a popular way to greet one's equals or friends. But we must be careful here. More than in any other field, that of the study of gesture is one in which the historian has to make the most of only a few clues. Still it is probably safe to say that our modern handshake first became known in England before it spread itself to other countries. The developments in England and France were certainly different. To the French in the first half of the nineteenth century the handshake was something new, a gesture that recently had come across the Channel. For example, when Leon Dupuis pays his farewell visit to Emma Bovary and then merely shakes hands with her, she exclaims 'A l'anglaise donc'.⁸⁶ Again, in Eugène Sue's *Mystères de Paris* Madame de Lucenay only receives a 'shake-hands' from a young cousin of hers, the Duke of Montbrison: 'Celui-ci allait donner un shake-hands à sa cousine'.⁸⁷ Both ladies, expecting a kiss on the hand, were clearly surprised by this more informal gesture. To French and other continental travellers visiting England, the same, rather egalitarian gesture must have been construed as typically English. It was certainly so to Casanova who in his *Mémoires*, written in the last decade of the eighteenth century, chose the phrase 'shake-hand amical' in describing a meeting with one of his London acquaintances.⁸⁸ Part of the difference between England and France may have been caused by a steady process of informalization leading eventually to the rise of 'sentimentalism' with Laurence Sterne as its foremost exponent.⁸⁹ Much of his *Sentimental Journey* reads as a mockery of all French 'politesse'. In other words, if the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw a strengthening of social hierarchy resulting in a growing discipline over one's own body and an increasing formality in manners, then we should also reckon with the possibility of a subsequent softening of this very same process, in which the more informal gesture of shaking hands was spread.

Much later, Turgenev, in his *Fathers and Sons*, set in 1859, had the Anglophile Pavel Petrovich 'shake hands' in the European manner with his hero Bazarow. So, perhaps the gesture spread from England and France to Russia.⁹⁰ By 1919 the handshake had even reached the imperial court of China. Those who have seen Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor* will recall how the young emperor

responds to the ceremonial bow proffered by his first Western tutor, the Scotsman Reginald Fleming Johnston, by descending from the throne to shake hands. Later the significance of the gesture was noted both by the tutor and by the ex-emperor himself in his autobiography. To them it was clearly a gesture of equality and friendship.⁹¹

The hypothesis that the Quakers were the first to introduce our present handshake, that its history stems only from the seventeenth century, is more difficult to support. The history of the handshake is not as surprising as that. For example, in a manners book published in 1607, the English author Janies Cleland rejected all those 'Frencli' and 'apish toies of bowing downe to everie mans shoe' in favour of 'our good olde Scottish shaking of the two right hands together at meeting with an uncovered head'. He further added, 'I think that an handful of our old friendship is worth a whole armeiful now.'⁹² Indeed, it is not unlikely that the handshake as a salutation was widely known in Europe before the new fashions of bowing and other formal gestures spread from France, Italy, and Spain. Translating the scene where Frère Jean des Entommeures is received by Gargantua and his friends, Johann Schiffart (1540–90) wrote: 'da war nichts als alle frewd, viel tausent will-komm, viel hundert guter Tag, Säck voll Grütz, ein solch Handgebens, Hänschlagens, Händeruckens'.⁹³ Surprisingly, the original did not mention anyone shaking hands at all: 'mille cliaresses, mille embrassemens, mille bons jours feurent donnez'." If Schiffart adapted this passage to the customs and manners of his countrymen, as he did with so many other of Rabelais's passages, then the Germans, like the English, must have known the handshake long before the Quakers. In fact, Maria Bogucka's contribution to this volume (see pp. 192 and 195) suggests that the same gesture was also known in sixteenth-century Poland.

Shaking hands, then, has been rightly called a 'traditional' gesture; it clearly goes back to the sixteenth century at least. But its history is far from linear; from that century on an intriguing development ensued. The gesture was gradually displaced by more hierarchic ways of greeting or taking leave and even became a polemical instrument in the hands of the Quakers against all deference and worldly vanity. Then, as manners were relaxed, the handshake became popular again: first in England and probably

also in the Dutch Republic, spreading later to France and later still to Russia. Viewed from that perspective, shaking hands and other 'nonsensical minutiae' were indeed as important as matters of state. In diplomatic circles they even *were* matters of state. More generally, we may conclude that the body reflected even in its smallest gestures the value that society, this other body, attached to matters of hierarchy or equality.

NOTES

I would like to thank Rudolf Dekker, Wayne Franits and, especially, Eddy de Jongh for their helpful comments on an earlier draft of this article.

- 1 For example, in a general overview of 'hand and arm in greeting', the anthropologist Raymond Firth calls the handshake 'the traditional greeting of Western countries': Raymond Firth, *Symbols, Public and Private* (London, 1973), pp. 319–20.
- 2 G. Herman, *Ritualised Friendship and the Greek City* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 41–72, esp. pp. 51–2. The connotations found by Herman are very similar to those discussed under 'Shaking hands' in this chapter, pp. 171–6.
- 3 See for example the observations by John Locke and Thomas Molyneux, mentioned in C.D. van Strien, *British Travellers in Holland during the Stuart Period: Edward Browne and John Locke as Tourists in the United Provinces* (Amsterdam, 1989), pp. 157 and 220 (Locke did not describe Dutch greeting and parting behaviour in general, but only that of the Labadists, a Protestant sect).
- 4 G. Brandt, *Historie der Reformatie en andere kerkelyke geschiedenissen* (4 vols, Amsterdam, 1674–1704), vol. II, p. 218.
- 5 For a very interesting analysis of the Quakers' language and gestures, see R. Bauman, *Let Your Words be Few: Symbolism of Speaking and Silence among Seventeenth-Century Quakers* (Cambridge, 1983), esp. pp. 43–62. Other sects, such as the diggers or the Fifth Monarchists, had similar ideas.
- 6 For a general, though incomplete, overview of Dutch manners books see Pieter Spierenburg, *Elites and Etiquette: Mentality and Social Structure in the Early Modern Northern Netherlands* (Rotterdam, 1981).

- 7 On this gesture, see J. Leite de Vasconcellos, *A figa: Estudo de etnografia comparativa* (Porto, 1925). The gesture is also mentioned by Erasmus, in a sermon from 1524. For a not completely correct translation, see *The Essential Erasmus*, ed. John P. Dolan (New York, 1964), p. 229. I owe both references to Dr A. V. N. van Woerden. See also Driessen, p. 250 n. 5 of this volume.
- 8 The actual gesture is hard to detect from a reproduction. For this (much debated) observation see Peter C. Sutton, 'Masters of Dutch genre painting', in *Masters of Seventeenth-Century Dutch Genre Painting*, ed. J. Iandola Watkins (Wiscbech, Cambs., 1984), p. xlv.
- 9 It is striking, for example, that sixteenth-century Dutch editions were published not in the northern Netherlands but in Antwerp. It was only in 1625 that Erasmus's manual, purged of its 'popish' passages, was declared compulsory reading at every Latin school, at least in the province of Holland. From 1626 onwards, when the expurgated text was finally published, it was used in the fifth form (our present first form) of these schools. In 1677 the booklet was still in use at Amsterdam, though now in the fourth form. However, as De la Fontaine Verwey concluded, it is not clear whether Erasmus's booklet was used at all the Latin schools in Holland. The number of copies extant is suspiciously low (the Rotterdam Public Library, which has one of the best collections of all Erasmus editions, mentions only editions of 1653, 1657, 1671, 1672 and 1703). Of course, schoolbooks seldom survive, but Erasmus's *Colloquia*, also declared compulsory subject matter, has survived in far greater numbers (this last conclusion based on an inventory which I drew up in 1982 of all books on the family and related themes, published in the northern Netherlands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that are available in Dutch university libraries and the Koninklijke Bibliotheek at The Hague). Surprisingly, the first wholly Dutch translation of Erasmus's treatise was published as late as 1693. In 1678 it was preceded by a mixed edition, aimed at the pupils of Latin schools, containing both the Latin text and a Dutch translation. For these and further details, see H. de la Fontaine Verwey, 'The first "book of etiquette" for children: Erasmus's *De civilitate morum puerilium*', *Quaerendo*, 1 (1971), pp. 19–30, esp. 27–9, reprinted in his *Uit de wereld van het boek* (Amsterdam, 1975), vol. 1, pp. 41–50.
- 10 Stephano Guazzo, *Van den heuschen burgerlycken ommegangh: een seer sin-rijcke, lieflijcke, ende nuttighe t'samensprekinghe* (Alkmaar, 1603). This was followed by a Latin edition in 1650 and published at Leiden.
- 11 Baldassare Castiglione, *De volmaeckte hovelinck* (Amsterdam, 1662,

- reprinted in 1675). Interestingly, the publisher dedicated the book to Jan Six, the Amsterdam burgomaster who acted as Rembrandt's patron for a long time. It seems that Six had recommended its translation; he had mentioned his high opinion of the manual to the publisher. He also had no fewer than three copies of the book. See George Möller, 'Het album Pandora van Jan Six (1618-1700)', *Jaarboek van het Genootschap Amstelodamum*, 77 (1984), p. 70.
- 12 (A. de Courtin), *Nieuwe verhandeling van de welgemanierdheit, welke in Vrankryk onder fraaye lieden gebruikelijk is* (Amsterdam, 1672). The title of the 1675 edition, reprinted in 1677, mentions the 'hoofsche wellevendheit, en loffelijcke welgemanierdheit, in Den Haag aen het hof en voorts door geheel Nederland, by treffelijke lieden gebruikelijk'.
 - 13 Giovanni della Casa, *Galateus of welgemanierdheit* (Amsterdam, 1715).
 - 14 *Het groot ceremonie-boeck der beschaafde zeeden, wellevendheit, ceremonieel, en welvoegende hoffelykheden onderwyzende hoe ieder een . . . zich behoorden te gedraagen, om zich zelven in deeze wereld, bemind en gelukkig te maaken*. By C. v[an] L[aar]. Amsterdam, n.d. [1735]. A second edition came out in 1755.
 - 15 Cited after S. W. Bijl, *Erasmus in het Nederlands tot 1617* (Leiden, 1978), p. 250.
 - 16 Jean de Parival, *Les délices de la Hollande: oeuvre panegyrique* (Leiden, 1651), p. 15.
 - 17 Cited after J. G. C. A. Briels, 'Brabantse blaaskaak en Hollandse botmuil. Cultuurontwikkelingen in het begin van de Gouden Eeuw', *De Zeventiende Eeuw*, 1 (1985), no. 1, p. 14.
 - 18 For the related problems of 'national character', see Driessen's contribution to this volume, ch. 10, section on 'Gesture and national stereotype'.
 - 19 Bredero's comedy *De Spaensche Brabander* (The Spanish Brabanter), published in 1614, and Visscher's *Brabbelingh*, published in 1599, are the most telling examples of such scoffing. For these and related texts, see Briels, 'Brabantse blaaskaak en Hollandse botmuil', passim, and Willem Frijhoff, 'Verfransing? Franse taal en Nederlandse cultuur tot in de revolutietijd', *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 104 (1989), 592-609, esp. pp. 594-6. See also his contribution to this volume, ch. 9, section on 'The sacred kiss'.
 - 20 Herman Roodenburg, *Onder censuur: de kerkelijke tucht in de gereformeerde gemeente van Amsterdam, 1578-1700* (Hilversum, 1990), p. 327.

- 21 Jacob Cats, *Al de werken* (Schiedam, n.d.), p. 146. His *Houwelyck* was first published in 1625.
- 22 On the Grand Tour and learning French, Italian or Spanish civility, see A. Frank-Van Westrienen, *De Groote Tour: Tekening van de educatiereis der Nederlanders in de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1983), esp. ch. 6. See also the observations on travelling by the famous humanist Justus Lipsius (1547–1606) in *Wegh-wyser, vertoonende de besonderste vremde vermaecklijckheden die in't reysen door Vranckryck en eenige aengrensende landen te sien zijn* (Amsterdam, 1647).
- 23 Little is known about the French schools in the Dutch Republic. However, in the beginning of the seventeenth century the Leiden poet and town clerk, Jan van Hout, sent his daughters to a French school, not to learn 'courtesan manners or to play the madam', he said when defending his decision, but to have a good education. Apparently, the school was offering more than this, cf. J. Prinsen, *De Nederlandsche Renaissance-dichter Jan van Hout* (Amsterdam, 1907), pp. 41–2. In 1761 a French school for girls in Maarssen provided lessons in French, orthography, geography, history 'and furthermore everything that belongs to mannerliness and a good education'; cf. E. P. de Booy, *Kweekhoven der wijsheid: Basis- en vervolgonderwijs in de steden van Utrecht van 1580 tot het begin der 19e eeuw* (Zutphen, 1980), p. 140. The role of tutors and dance-masters was well-known and often criticized.
- 24 See, for example, *Huygens herdacht: Catalogus bij de tentoonstelling in de Koninklijke Bibliotheek ter gelegenheid van de 300ste sterfdag van Constantijn Huygens*, ed. Arthur Eyffinger (The Hague, 1987), p. 140. Apparently, such considerations were often put forward, as they were contested by one of the leading Calvinist ministers, Gisbertus Voetius, as arguments that were only too popular. See Roodenburg, *Onder censuur*, p. 328.
- 25 James Boswell, *Life of Johnson*, ed. R. W. Chapman (London, 1970), p. 509.
- 26 N. Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation: Soziogenetische und psychogenetische Untersuchungen* (2 vols, Basel, 1939), vol. I, esp. pp. 174–230 on the essential activities.
- 27 The phrase is of course Erving Goffman's. See his *Relations in Public: Microstudies of the Public Order* (New York, 1971).
- 28 In his *Die höfische Gesellschaft* Elias sketches a picture of court life that comes much closer to the world of the manuals on civility, but there he hardly makes use of them, basing his case mostly on the memoirs of the Duke of St Simon and others. See Norbert Elias, *Die höfische Gesellschaft: Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Königtums*

- und der höfischen Aristokratie* (Darmstadt and Neuwied, 1969), esp. pp. 120–77.
- 29 *Het boeckje van Erasmus aengaende de beleeftheit der kinderlijcke zeden*, ed. H. de la Fontaine Verwey (Amsterdam, 1969), pp. 17–21, (hereafter, 'Boeckje'). This is a reprint of the 1678 edition. For the arm akimbo, see Spicer, in this volume, ch. 5.
 - 30 The differences seem even larger: Erasmus wrote his book for a young boy, whereas De Courtin intended his book to be read by boys and girls on the threshold of adulthood.
 - 31 Honoré de Balzac, *Théorie de la démarche et autres textes*, 1st edn, 1833 (Paris, 1978), p. 52 (I owe this reference to Benjo Maso); Fr. Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe* (Munich and Berlin, 1980), vol. 11, p. 543.
 - 32 *Nieuwe verhandeling*, pp. 231–3, 241–2.
 - 33 *Officia Ciceronis, leerende wat yegelick in allen staten behoort te doen* (Leiden, 1589), p. 46. This translation, made by the well-known humanist Dirck Volckertsz. Coornhert, included one of Erasmus's letters praising Cicero's book. The translation itself was quite popular and went through three further editions. For the very similar rules in Greece and Rome, see Bremmer, this volume, ch. 1; Graf, this volume, ch. 2, note 18.
 - 34 My own views on these depictions of lower-class life are close to those of Svetlana Alpers. See her 'Breugel's festive peasants', *Simiolus* 6 (1972/3), no. 3/4, pp. 163–76, and her 'Realism as a comic mode: low-life painting seen through Bredero's eyes', *Simiolus* 8 (1975/6), no. 3, pp. 115–44. See also Muchembled's contribution to this volume, ch. 6, section on 'The art of gesture', and his *L'invention de l'homme moderne: sensibilités, mœurs et comportements collectifs sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris, 1988), ch. 2. Cf. Paul Vandebroek, *Beeld van de andere, vertoog over het zelf: over wilden en narren, boeren en bedelaars* (Antwerp, 1987); and idem, *Jheronimus Bosch: tussen volksleven en stadscultuur* (Berchem-Antwerp, 1987).
 - 35 See Huygens's notes on the education of his children, published in *Huygens herdacht*, pp. 96–101. Cf. this passage with Samuel van Hoogstraten, *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst: anders de zichtbaere werelt* (Rotterdam, 1678), p. 117. On the social meanings of an upright posture and also on early modern medical treatises how to avoid deformity in children by straightening and strengthening the joints, see Georges Vigarello, 'The upward training of the body from the age of chivalry to courtly civility', in *Fragments for a History of the Human Body* (3 vols, New York, 1989), vol. II, pp. 149–96; see also *Der aufrechte Gang: Zur Symbolik einer*

- Körperhaltung*, ed. J.J. Warncken (Tubingen, 1990).
- 36 *Groot ceremonie-boeck*, pp. 179, 181.
- 37 *Groot ceremonie-boeck*, pp. 68, 169, 171, 179.
- 38 (Fr. van Acrssen van Sommelsdijck), *Voyage d'Espagne, contenant entre plusieurs particularitez de ce royaume, trois discours politiques sur les affaires du Protecteur d'Angleterre, de la Reine de Sardie, et du Duc de Loraine* (Cologne, 1667), pp. 31, 34–5. For his travels through Italy and especially his remark on the elite at Genoa, see L. G. Péliissier, 'Sur quelques documents utiles pour l'histoire des rapports entre la France et l'Italie', in *Atti del Congresso Internazionale di Scienze Storiche* (Roma, 1–9 Aprile 1903), vol. III (Rome, 1906), pp. 173–256, esp. p. 253.
- 39 G. A. Bredero, *The Spanish Brabanter: A Seventeenth-Century Dutch Social Satire in Five Acts*, ed. H. David Brumble (Binghamton N.Y., 1982). See esp. p. 78, where Robbeknol, Jeroelimo's servant, comments upon his master: 'Now his pride is up again. / High words maintain his gravity – / He who hasn't yet a mussel shell to scrape his arse.' The character was grafted onto one of the figures in *Lazarillo de Tormes*. For other seventeenth-century references to Spanish 'gravity', see Aernout van Overbeke, *Anecdota sive historia jocosae*, ed. Rudolf Dekker and Herman Roodenburg (Amsterdam, 1991), nos. 783, 1726.
- 40 Around 1900 the expression was still known among the Dutch Sephardim. Cf. J. A. van Praag, 'Restos de los idiosmos Hispanolusitanos entre los Sefardies de Amsterdam', *Boletín de la Academia Española* (1931), pp. 177–201, esp. p. 195. I owe this reference to Tirtsah Levie-Bernfeld.
- 41 Cf. Burke, this volume, ch. 4, section on 'The gesticulating Italian'.
- 42 See for this distinction, E. Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Harmondsworth, 1972), pp. 14 and 18.
- 43 Erasmus, *Boeckje*, p. 14.
- 44 De Courtin, *Nouveau traité de la civilité qui se pratique en France* (Amsterdam, 1671), pp. 24–5.
- 45 Erasmus, *Boeckje*, p. 19; *Groot ceremonie-boeck*, p. 204.
- 46 Cf. A. Mehrabian, *Nonverbal Communication* (Chicago and New York, 1972), esp. p. 153.
- 47 Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *Trattato dell'Arte de la Pittura* (Milan, 1584), p. 141.
- 48 I follow here the 'modalities of violation' suggested by Goffman, *Relations in Public*, pp. 44–9. The study of personal space when talking to each other has created an autonomous field of research called 'proxemics'. See for example, E. T. Hall, *Handbook for Proxemic Research* (Washington, 1974).

- 49 *Nieuwe verhandeling*, pp. 26, 59; *Groot ceremonie-boeck*, pp. 205–6, 371.
- 50 Erasmus, *Boeckje*, p. 8; *Nieuwe verhandeling*, pp. 21, 23; *Groot ceremonie-boeck*, pp. 180, 203–4.
- 51 *Nieuwe verhandeling*, pp. 33–4, 45; *Groot ceremonie-boeck*, p. 67.
- 52 *Nieuwe verhandeling*, pp. 34, 68; *Groot ceremonie-boeck*, pp. 204, 206.
- 53 *Nieuwe verhandeling*, pp. 16, 20, 23–4, 27, 185–6; *Groot ceremonie-boeck*, pp. 56–62.
- 54 Guazzo tells us how a couple of French courtiers were ridiculed because of such a 'gaffe'. Seeing an Italian duke standing with his hat in hand, they had taken him by the arm to urge him to cover his head. Guazzo's comment was clear: such rudeness would have demanded that the duke had put his hat on, letting the courtiers know that he had only bared his head because of the heat and certainly not to show any respect to his company: Guazzo, *Van den heuschen burgerlycken ommegangh*, p. 146.
- 55 E. Panofsky, *Meaning in the Visual Arts: Papers in and on art history* (New York, 1955), p. 26.
- 56 For one of the few exceptions, see Wayne Franits, 'The family saying grace: a theme in Dutch art of the seventeenth century', *Simiolus*, 16 (1986), pp. 36–49, esp. pp. 43 (n. 43) and 45, in which the author draws our attention to boys removing their hats at prayer. For an interesting historical study, see Penelope J. Corfield, 'Dress for deference and dissent: hat and the decline of hat honour', *Costume*, 23 (1989), pp. 64–79.
- 57 On the persons portrayed, see Gary Schwartz, *Rembrandt His Life, His Paintings* (New York, 1985), p. 336.
- 58 *Nieuwe verhandeling*, pp. 17–18; *Groot ceremonie-boeck*, pp. 64–5. On the masks, see also J. H. Der Kinderen-Besier, *Spelevaart der mode: de kledijonzer voorouders in de zeventiende eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1950), p. 68.
- 59 *Nieuwe verhandeling*, pp. 57–8; cf. De Courtin, *Nouveau traité*, pp. 61–4.
- 60 Peter Burke, *Dutch Popular Culture in the Seventeenth Century: A Reconnaissance* (Rotterdam, 1978); Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (London, 1987), p. 174.
- 61 Guazzo, *Van den heuschen burgerlycken ommegangh*, 'Voor-reden des oversetters tot den leser'.
- 62 (Justus van Effen), *De Hollandsche Spectator* (12 vols, Amsterdam, 1731–5), vol. VII, p. 10.

- 63 In a typical case the Quaker, Jacob van Buylaert, imprisoned in Leeuwarden, refused to bare his head when he was interrogated by one of the aldermen. The problem was solved when one of the sheriff's helpers just pulled the hat from his head. See C. B. Hylkema, *Reformatours: geschiedkundige studiën over de godsdienstige bewegingen uit de nadagen onzer Gouden Eeuw* (2 vols, Haarlem, 1900), vol. II, pp. 68–9. It is possible that acts of deference were expected less within certain religious denominations. The Mennonite weaver Jan Stevensz. obviously annoyed his minister, Galenus Abrahamsz. de Haan, when he doffed his hat in front of him and the other members of the Mennonite consistory. In the weaver's eyes they had all acted not as brothers but as masters. (J(an) S(tevensz.), *Fondament-boeck, of grondigk bewijs van de kennisse Godts, en de christelijke godtsdienst* (Amsterdam, 1683), 'Eerste Aenhangsel', p. 63.
- 64 J. Heringa, *De eer en hoogheid van de staat: over de plaats der Verenigde Nederlanden in het diplomatieke leven van de zeventiende eeuw* (Groningen, 1961), pp. 6, 154–5, 262–4. The author mentions many of the contemporary treatises on diplomacy.
- 65 Heringa, *De eer en hoogheid van de staat*, pp. 340–1.
- 66 Heringa, *De eer en hoogheid van de staat*, pp. 168–9.
- 67 Heringa, *De eer en hoogheid van de staat*, pp. 166–7.
- 68 This does not preclude, of course, that some members of the upper class were less refined in their manners. A lady-in-waiting of Elizabeth, Electress Palatine and Queen of Bohemia, was shocked to see the burgomaster of Alkmaar take leave of the queen by planting a big kiss squarely on her mouth. See *Adriaen vnn de Venne's Album in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, ed. Martin Royalton-Kisch (London, 1988), p. 349 (Appendix).
- 69 In the first half of the eighteenth century Justus van Effen poked fun at those of his countrymen who made fools of themselves in always demanding precedence, even from their superiors. See *De Hollandsche Spectator*, vol. VII, pp. 10–15. Anecdotes on diplomatic incidents in The Hague were equally popular, especially on the controversies between the French and the Spanish ambassadors who blocked the streets with their carriages as they refused to give each other right of way. The very Dutch and sober way in which Johan de Witt, the Grand Pensionary of Holland, settled these disputes was certainly part of the fun. See Van Overbeke, *Anecdota*, nos. 75, 749, 1979.
- 70 Pélassier, 'Sur quelques documents', pp. 221–2.
- 71 It is interesting that originally not only Tulp but also the surgeon Frans van Loenen had been depicted with a hat; cf. William

Schupbach, 'The paradox of Rembrandt's "Anatomy of Dr Tulp"', *Medical History*, 26 (1982), suppl. no. 2, pp. 29–30.

72 See note 3.

73 David Garrioch, *Neighbourhood and Community in Paris, 1740–1790* (Cambridge, 1986). Richard Cobb, *The Police and the People: French Popular Protest, 1789–1820* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 122, 198–200. For another stimulating study on neighbourhood life in Paris, see T. Brennan, *Public Drinking and Popular Culture in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Princeton, 1988).

74 About the quarters, see esp. D. Haks, *Huwelijk en gezin in Holland in de 17de en 18de eeuw: processtukken en moralisten over aspecten van het laat 17de- en 18de-eeuwse gezinsleven* (Assen, 1982), pp. 62–4. See also Roodenburg, *Onder censuur*, esp. pp. 39–43 and 244–54.

75 Bruce Lenman and Geoffrey Parker, 'The state, the community and the criminal law in early modern Europe' in *Crime and the Law: The Social History of Crime in Western Europe since 1500*, eds V. A. C. Gatrell, B. Lenman and G. Parker (London, 1980), pp. 11–48.

76 De Parival, *Les délices de la Hollande*, pp. 17–19.

77 W. Aglionby, *The Present State of the United Provinces of the Low Countries* (London, 1669), p. 226.

78 Examples taken from Roodenburg, *Onder censuur*, esp. pp. 207–8, 248–9, 352–3, 359. In the criminal archives of sixteenth-century Artois the handshake equally figured not as a salutation but as a sign of confidence and appeasement. Robert Muchembled, *La violence au village: Sociabilité et comportements populaires en Artois du XVe au XVIIe siècle* (Turnhout, 1989), pp. 250–1.

79 Hans Bontemantel, *De regeering van Amsterdam soo in't civiel als crimineel en militaire*, ed. G. W. Kernkamp (2 vols, The Hague, 1897), vol. I, p. 55.

80 Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches*, p. 349.

81 On the remarkable ritual of inversion behind this confederation see Henk van Nierop, 'Beggars' banquet: the confederation of the nobility and the politics of inversion', *European History Quarterly*, 21 (1991).

82 The gesture may have had several meanings. It probably pointed to the ideals of peace and fraternity that were still cherished by the civic guards, but it also referred to the peace treaty and, more concretely, to a new alliance between two important factions within the Amsterdam government – those led by Witsen and Van Waveren. Cf. Schwartz, *Rembrandt*, p. 258.

83 E. de Jongh, *Portretten van echt en trouw: huwelijk en gezin in de Nederlandse kunst van de zeventiende eeuw* (Zwolle and Haarlem,

- 1986), esp. pp. 154–5. See also Erwin Panofsky, 'Jan van Eyck's Arnolfini portrait', *The Burlington Magazine*, 64 (1934), pp. 117–27. For an interesting critique of Panofsky, see Jan Baptist Bedaux, 'The reality of symbols: the question of disguised symbolism in Jan van Eyck's "Arnolfini portrait"', *Simiolus*, 16 (1986), pp. 5–28, repr. in his *The Reality of Symbols: Studies in the Iconology of Netherlandish Art 1400–1800* (The Hague and Maarssen, 1990), pp. 21–69.
- 84 Mme la Baronesse de Fresne, *De l'usage et de la politesse dans le monde* (Paris, 1858), p. 35.
- 85 William Sewall, *The History of the Rise, Increase and Progress of the Christian People Called Quakers, intermixed with several remarkable occurrences* (London, 1722), p. 690. The book was originally published in Dutch in 1717.
- 86 Gustave Flaubert, *Madame Bovary: Moeurs de province* (Paris, 1857), p. 131.
- 87 Eugène Sue, *Les mystères de Paris* (3 vols, Paris, 1977–S), vol. III, p. 249.
- 88 J. Casanova de Seingalt, *Mémoires* (8 vols, Paris, n.d.), vol. VII, p. 47.
- 89 In 1711 Joseph Addison observed a greater formality in the country, an adherence to 'the Manners of the last Age', to 'those Refinements which formerly reigned in the Court. . . .' Indeed, 'A Polite Country Squire shall make you as many bows in half an hour as would serve a courtier for a Week.' See Joseph Addison, *The Spectator* (4 vols, London 1907 edn), vol. I, 135–6. The remarks made by Justus van Effen (see note 62) suggest a similar process of informalization.
- 90 I. S. Turgenev, *Otcy i deti*, 2nd edn (Leipzig, 1880), p. 29. The author referred to the gesture, not in Russian but in English, using not the Cyrillic but the Roman alphabet. It should be added that Pavel Petrovich's handshake was considered quite old-fashioned by the young Bazarow.
- 91 Johnston described the event as follows: 'The little emperor Hsüan-T'ung had passed out of his mythological stage when he stepped down from his chair and shook hands with me on that cold March morning in 1919.' See R. F. Johnston, *Twilight in the Forbidden City* (London, 1934), p. 179. In the seventeenth century the Chinese were amazed at finding the Dutch shake hands with them at official welcome ceremonies. See Qu Dajun, *Guangdong xinyu* (Peking, 1985 edn), p. 481, quoted in K. Ruitenbeek, 'Westerlingen in de achttiende-eeuwse Chinese kunst', *Aziatische kunst*, 20 (1990), no. 4, pp. 10–22, esp. p. 12.
- 92 James Cleland, *The Institution of a Young Noble Man* (Oxford, 1607), Book V, ch. 5, pp. 176–8. I owe this reference to Keith Thomas and a further exploration of the passage to Robert Parker.

- 93 (Fr. Rabelais), *Affentheurliche, naupengeheurliche Geschichtklitterung von Thaten und Rahte der . . . Gorgellantua und . . . Pantagrue durch Huldreich Elloposeleron* (Grenflug im Gänsserich, 1590) ch. 42.
- 94 Fr. Rabelais, *Gargantua*, ed. Pierre Michel (Paris, 1969), ch. xxxix, p. 313.